

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 MCT-01 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00 OMB-01
TRSE-00 /094 W
-----127796 231403Z /53

R 222048Z FEB 78 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5830
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 05761

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS EG CY
SUBJECT: CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR'S VERSION OF
- LARNACA INCIDENT

REF: (A) CAIRO 5689, (B) CAIRO 5678, (C) CAIRO 5537

1. CALLED ON CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR SOTERIADES TODAY.
HE IS "DOYEN" OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND A FRIEND OF MANY
YEARS STANDING. I HAD HEARD HE WAS LEAVING TOMORROW
AND WANTED TO SEE HIM BEFORE HE LEFT.

2. SOTERIADES, WHO HAS BEEN IN EGYPT TWELVE YEARS,
WAS CONSIDERABLY UPSET ABOUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.
HIS VERSION OF LARNACA INCIDENT, BASED ON KYPRIANOU'S
STATEMENT, IS AT VARIANCE WITH EGYPTIAN CLAIM. ACCORDING
SOTERIADES, EGYPTIANS (PRIMIN SALEM TO CYPRIOT MFA UNDER
SEC STAVROS TELECON) ADVISED CYPRIOTS THAT THEY WERE
SENDING A PLANE CARRYING A "MINISTER" TO ASSIST IN
OBTAINING THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. NOTHING WAS
SAID ABOUT EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS. WHEN C-130 ARRIVED AT
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LARNACA, IT WAS MET BY A CYPRIOT MINISTER EXPECTING TO
GREET HIS EGYPTIAN COUNTERPART. INSTEAD, EGYPTIAN
COMMANDOS ABOARD. SINCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORISTS
UNDERWAY, EGYPTIANS WERE ASKED, THROUGH EGYPTIAN
AMBASSADOR AND MILITARY ATTACHE, TO REMAIN ON AIRCRAFT.
EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AND MILITARY ATTACHE GAVE THEIR WORD
TO CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES THAT COMMANDOS WOULD COMPLY.

INSTEAD, WHEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORISTS APPEARED TO BE SUCCEEDING AND ONE OF TERRORISTS APPEARED AT PLANE DOOR, EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS DEBOUCHED FROM C-130 AND FIRED AT CYPRUS AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT. AS RESULT, CYPRIOT NATIONAL GUARD RETURNED FIRE, KILLING AND WOUNDING LARGE NUMBER OF COMMANDOS AND DESTROYING C-130.

3. SOTERIADES DEPLORED THE INCIDENT, ALL THE MORE SO SINCE HE RECOGNIZES GOE HAS BEEN ONE OF STAUNCHEST SUPPORTERS OF CYPRUS AGAINST THE TURKS. HE CHARGED, NEVERTHELESS, THAT EGYPTIAN ACTIONS IN SENDING COMMANDOS WITHOUT CYPRIOT AUTHORIZATION AND OPENING FIRE ON CYPRUS AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT WERE "VIOLATIONS OF CYPRIOT SOVEREIGNTY." WHEN HE TAXED PRIMIN SALEM LAST EVENING WITH HAVING MISLED CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES BY SPEAKING OF A "MINISTER" BEING SENT ABOARD C-130, SALEM CLAIMED THAT THIS WAS A "CODE WORD" TO SIGNIFY COMMANDOS. (THIS IS SIMILAR TO WHAT SALEM SAID TO ME LAST EVENING--REF B NOTAL.) SALEM HAD DEMANDED THE EXTRADITION OF THE TWO PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS. HE, SOTERIADES, HAD POINTED OUT THAT THE TWO TERRORISTS ARE NOT EGYPTIANS AND THAT THERE WERE OTHER NATIONALS AMONG THE HOSTAGES, HENCE GOC UNABLE EXTRADITE THE TWO TERRORISTS TO EGYPT. IN ANY CASE, SOTERIADES CLAIMED, GOC INTENDS TRY THE TERRORISTS AND HAS INVITED GOE SEND OBSERVERS TO TRIAL AND EVEN CONDUCT INTERROGATIONS OF TERRORISTS. HE HEDGED ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES

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INTENDED PROVIDE TERRORISTS WITH PASSPORTS AND RELEASE THEM.

4. CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES HAVE ASKED THAT EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AND MILITARY ATTACHE BE WITHDRAWN, AND GOE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT IS WITHDRAWING NOT ONLY THESE TWO OFFICIALS BUT ALSO "TRADE AND TECHNICAL" PERSONNEL. NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT WITHDRAWING OTHER EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. AS OF NOW, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT GOE ASKING SOTERIADES TO LEAVE AND/OR SUSPENDING RELATIONS, GOE HAS TAKEN NO ACTION AGAINST CYPRUS EMBASSY HERE. SOTERIADES IS SCHEDULED MEET WITH ACTING FONMIN BOUTROS GHALI THIS EVENING TO RECEIVE SOME EGYPTIAN "SUGGESTIONS" ON RESOLVING THE CRISIS AND WILL FLY TO NICOSIA TOMORROW. HE HOPES TO RETURN ON SUNDAY.

5. THIS MORNING, ACCORDING SOTERIADES, A GROUP OF DEMONSTRATORS APPEARED AT CYPRUS EMBASSY IN ZAMALEK AND THREATENED BLOW UP THE PREMISES UNLESS CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR AND STAFF GAVE THEMSELVES UP AS HOSTAGES PENDING EXTRADITION OF THE TWO PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS. EGYPTIAN POLICE WERE CALLED AND QUICKLY DISPERSED THE DEMONSTRATORS.

CYPRUS EMBASSY (AND RESIDENCE IN HELIOPOLIS) CURRENTLY
HEAVILY GUARDED BY HELMETED POLICE AND PLAINCLOTHESMEN.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 22 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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